

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

IS IT PRE-MILLENNIAL?



By

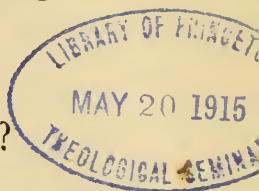
R. J. G. McKNIGHT, Ph.D.

Wilkinsburg, Pa.

1915

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

IS IT PRE-MILLENNIAL?



*Presented to Princeton
Theological Seminary Library
By the author
R. J. G. McKnight*

✓ By

R. J. G. McKNIGHT, Ph.D.

Wilkinsburg, Pa.

1915

SCB
10515

Copyright, 1915
R. J. G. McKNIGHT

To
My Father

CONTENTS.

Chapter.	Page.
I. A Statement of the Problem.....	7
II. The Origin of the Pre-Millennial Idea...	10
III. Pre-Millennialism in the Early Church...	12
IV. Has Pre-Millennialism a Scriptural Basis.	18
V. Exegesis of Revelation XX:4-6.....	20
VI. The Pre-Millennial View of the Bride of Christ	36
VII. Pre-Millennialists and the Doctrine of a General Judgment	43
VIII. The Restoration of Material Sacrifices...	47
IX. Pre-Millennialism Involves a Second Hu- miliation	52
X. Discredits the Work of the Holy Spirit..	56
XI. Essentially Pessimistic	60
XII. Views of the Commentators.....	66
XIII. Modern Evangelists and Pre-Millennialism	70
XIV. Conclusion	72

PREFACE.

THE title of this brochure suggests its purpose. It is designed to show that the Pre-Millennial view of Christ's Second Coming is without any warrant whatsoever. The Pre-Millennialist has become a propagandist. If he is very careful to quote no farther, he can say, and that truly, "This one thing I do." In the pulpit, on the platform, through the press, in the classroom, he calls "to them that pass by, who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither."

Consequently most of the literature on the subject, as it appears from time to time, wears the pale cast of Pre-Millennial thought. This ancient fallacy has been refuted times without number but, unfortunately, these refutations are not readily accessible to the general reader. With the exception of the Bible, and one or two standard works of uninspired men, there is very little literature in wide circulation that exposes the weaknesses and the dangers of the Pre-Millennial theory.

It has been the aim of the present writer to set forth the evidence against Pre-Millennialism in brief compass. Many arguments have been omitted. This little pamphlet has been written, primarily, in the hope of strengthening the convictions of those who have not been charmed by the Pre-Millennial enchanters. One would be sanguine indeed to hope that any Pre-Millennialist could be convinced of his error. Besides, "convince" posits so much.

What the advocates of the Pre-Millennial view have to say for their theory the author has read with as much patience as a strict exegesis of the Scriptures on the subject of long-suffering would seem to require. The student who sets himself the task of reading *Jesus is Coming*, by "W. E. B.," will be at no loss to understand what patience is capable of doing when she performs her perfect work. The material which has gone into the following pages has been gathered wherever it was to be found, and the author wishes to make due acknowledgement of all the help he has received from those who have preceded him in this field. He is especially indebted to the volumes prepared by the late Dr. David Brown and the late Dr. D. MacDill. The Scriptural quotations are according to the American Revision.

R. J. G. M.

*Copies of this pamphlet may be obtained
by addressing the author, Wilkinsburg, Pa.
10 cents a copy. One dollar a dozen.*

I. A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

CHRIST has given to his people many distinct and definite promises that he will return to the world. This promised return is called the "Second Advent" or "The Second Coming." Christians agree as to the fact of the Second Coming, but they are far from agreement as to the time of that event and its significance for the world.

There are those who believe that Christ will return to the world at least a thousand years before the end of time, and that he will establish a terrestrial kingdom. They believe that the Jerusalem of Palestine will be the seat of his government, and that there the throne of David will be re-established. Upon this throne Christ will sit in visible, bodily form, and he, together with those of the saints who shall have been raised, will reign over a world peopled by men who are still in the flesh, and who continue to follow the usual pursuits of mankind. This earthly reign of our Lord will continue for a thousand years, or for a Millennium. Because those who hold this view fix the time of Christ's return or second coming *before* the Millennium, they are known as Pre-Millennialists.

The program that has just been outlined is not presented as a complete statement of *all* that every Pre-Millennialist believes concerning the events that are to attend the Second Coming or the conditions which are to prevail when Christ has come again.

3 THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

This statement is framed to include only those basic elements of the Pre-Millennial view to which all of its defenders would freely subscribe.

Indeed, the points of disagreement among Pre-Millennialists themselves are more numerous than the points of agreement. While they all agree that Christ and the saints will reign over men who are still in the flesh, they are not agreed as to the character of these men. Some think that those who constitute the subjects of this kingdom will all be righteous; while others affirm just as confidently that the inhabitants of the world during the Millennium will number among them both righteous and wicked. There are other details which even the later Prophetic Conferences have not been able to determine absolutely. Will the seat of government be "in the air" or on earth? Will Christ's throne be visible or invisible? Will the reign of Christ be absolute or partial? To these questions and to many others, Pre-Millennialists give conflicting answers.

It is necessary, therefore, to define Pre-Millennialism by those things and only those things that are essential to the doctrine, lest injustice be done to those whose program for the Millennium does not harmonize in detail with that which has been approved by Pre-Millennialists as a class.

To state it briefly, then, Pre-Millennialism is a term used to describe the view that Christ will return to the earth, to reign with his saints over the world, for at least a thousand years before the end of time, the general resurrection and the final judgment.

On the other hand there are those who believe just as firmly in the fact of the Second Coming, but

who believe that Scripture teaches that the Second Coming will mark the end of time, that the Millennium and all other events which concern the earthly existence of man shall have then passed into history, and that the purpose of his coming will be "to give to every man according as his work shall be." Those who hold this view fix the time of the Second Coming *after* the Millennium and are therefore known as Post-Millennialists.

It will be seen at once that these two conceptions of the Second Coming are essentially antithetical. They cannot be harmonized. If one be true, the other must be false. Both of these views cannot be scriptural. All Christians are agreed that the doctrine of the Second Coming is a scriptural doctrine. If, then, it be found upon investigation that Scripture warrants one of these views, it will be found at the same time that it condemns the other. Of these two opposed views the one that is most persistently advocated to-day is the Pre-Millennial view.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-MILLENNIAL IDEA.

The Pre-Millennial idea is of Jewish origin and never loses its Jewish features. Most of the heathen nations have regarded the Golden Age as belonging to the past; the Jews located the Golden Age in the future. For them it was the Millennium. Among the Jews the conception of a glorious Millennium took its rise in the account of creation. They began with the idea that "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." God labored six days in creation. He rested on the seventh day. Accordingly the world would continue in its natural course for six thousand years and then would come a Sabbatical Millenary, a seventh millennium of triumph and peace. This millennium was to be marked by the supremacy of the Jews; their Temple was to become the center of the worship of the whole race; the throne of David was to be restored and their Messiah was to sit upon it in regal splendor. This is still the hope of the Jews. They look for Immanuel to come and sit upon a material throne that is to be set up in Jerusalem, and from this throne Messiah will reign over the world.

This is precisely the conception of the Pre-Millennialist. In the early church Pre-Millennialists were known as Chiliasts, and they were, very properly, charged with Judaizing tendencies, because they attempted to mould Christianity into Jewish forms. The points of agreement between the Jews and the

Pre-Millennialists are patent. Both Jews and Pre-Millennialists affirm that the Messiah's Kingdom has not yet been established and that He has not yet begun to reign. "And it (The Kingdom of Christ) will be future until Jesus, having received the Kingdom, shall return to recompense tribulation to those who have troubled the Church and sit in the throne of his glory."* With this compare Acts II: 34-36, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God *hath made him both Lord and Christ*, this Jesus whom ye crucified." He was *on* the throne when Peter spoke. He had been "made" both Lord and Christ. It was even then a thing of the past. Both Jews and Pre-Millennialists declare that *all* of the prophecies which concern the Kingdom of the Messiah or his Kingship are yet awaiting fulfilment. Both hold that the fulfilment will be absolutely literal† even to the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple and the restoration of the bloody sacrifices. There is but one point in which there is any vital disagreement between Jews and Pre-Millennialists. The Jews deny that the Messiah has come the first time, in the Incarnation; the Pre-Millennialists accept the Gospel record of this event.

*W. E. B. *Jesus is Coming*, pp. 84-85.

†Mr. Sunday *Sermon*, p. 10, "The pulling down of Zion was literal, so also must the building up."

III. PRE-MILLENNIALISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

The Pre-Millennialist lays much stress upon the prevalence of Chiliasm in the primitive Church, and the conclusion which he draws is, that it is to be presumed that those who lived so near the time of the Apostles could not have held any unscriptural views concerning the Second Coming of Christ. He asserts, moreover, that Chiliasm was the universal belief of the early Church. The attention of the reader may be called at this point to some facts which Pre-Millennialists have either overlooked or perverted.

Joseph Mede, who was a Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and an ardent Pre-Millennialist, says:—"This dogma of the 1000 years Regnum was the general opinion of all orthodox Christians in the age immediately following the Apostles, if Justin Martyr say true."* He also says:—"This was the opinion of the whole orthodox Christian Church in the age immediately following the death of St. John, as Justin Martyr expressly affirmeth."

What Justin Martyr *does* say is this:—"I and whatsoever Christians are right minded in all things are of this opinion (Pre-Millennial); but I have also showed you on the other hand that many Christians, who are of pure and godly doctrine, do not acknowledge it."† The ardent Pre-Millennialist, Mede, de-

*Mede's *Works*, pp. 602, 771.

†*Dialogus cum Tryphone*, c. 80.

liberately corrupted the text when he quoted from Justin Martyr. He boldly inserted a negative in the clause—"Many Christians who *are* of pure and godly doctrine, do not acknowledge it," and made it read "Many Christians who *are* (*not*) of pure and godly doctrine, do not acknowledge it." Of course it is Mede's text and not the words of Justin Martyr which the average Pre-Millennialist prefers to quote.

Rev. W. Kelly, of England, however, although a Pre-Millennialist, says:— "It is painful that such a man as Mede should have insisted on interpolating a negative in the statement of Justin. The fact is there is not the slightest manuscript authority for the insertion, and the internal evidence is, in my judgment, decidedly against it."‡

Gibbon is brought forward in support of the assertion that Chiliasm was the universal belief of the early church. Gibbon follows the corrupted text of Mede, but he also says:— "it might not be universally received"!* Then, too, it must be remembered that Gibbon was a sceptic, and that he always lays emphasis on anything that would reflect discredit on the Christian religion. It is for this reason that he gives prominence to the prevalence of Pre-Millennialism. But it is noteworthy that Gibbon, the sceptic, is just a trifle more careful, not to say conscientious, than Mede, the Pre-Millennialist.

Neander also is cited in support of the universal acceptance of Chiliasm by the early Church. He does, indeed, speak of this belief as widespread. No one denies that it was. But he says:— "What we

‡Lectures on Rev., p. 415, note.

*Decline and Fall, chap. 15.

have just said (of Chiliasm), however, is not to be so understood as if Chiliasm had ever formed a part of the general creed of the church.”†

It has been shown, then, that Justin Martyr, although he himself was a Chiliast, declares that “many Christians, who are of pure and godly doctrine, do *not* acknowledge it.” If, then, there were “many Christians” whose doctrine was both “pure and godly,” who did not acknowledge it, and if these Christians lived just as near to the time of Christ and the Apostles as did the Pre-Millennial Christians, might the conclusion not quite as clearly be drawn, that the Pre-Millennial view of the Second Coming was *not* taught by Christ and the Apostles? How could their doctrine be described as “pure and godly” if they rejected what Christ himself taught? According to the witnesses called by the Pre-Millennialists themselves Chiliasm was *not* the universal belief of the early church.

Furthermore, suppose it be conceded, for the moment, that it was universally accepted by the early church, what is thereby established? Opposition to the evangelization of the Gentiles was, at a time earlier even than Justin Martyr, the universal belief of the church—at least more nearly so than Chiliasm could ever have been. Time after time, even in Apostolic days, Paul was compelled to correct erroneous views that were all but universally held by the early Christians.

The prevalence of an opinion even among Christians is by no means conclusive evidence that it is correct. To so many minds such evidence as the follow-

†Neander's Ch. Hist. Vol. I, p. 651.

ing seems to be conclusive:— “Papias was the disciple of the Apostle John; Irenaeus was the disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. Papias and Irenaeus were Pre-Millennialists. Therefore the doctrine of Pre-Millennialism is an Apostolic doctrine.” But Peter was closer to the source of truth than either Papias or Irenaeus. *Peter* was a disciple of *Christ*. Nevertheless, within a short time after the ascension, Peter had fallen into grievous error concerning the requirements that were to be made of Gentile converts. And it took a stern rebuke from Paul to set him right.

Again, if these Post-Apostolic Fathers received their conceptions of the *time* of the Second Coming directly from the Apostles, is it not reasonable to suppose that their view of the *conditions* that are to prevail in the Millennium will be equally infallible? Would they not receive both conceptions from the same source? Irenaeus says of the Millennium:— “The days will come when vines will grow, each having 10,000 branches; each branch having 10,000 shoots; each shoot 10,000 clusters; each cluster 10,000 grapes; and each grape yielding 25 measures of wine. In like manner, a grain of wheat will produce 10,000 heads; each head having 10,000 grains; and each grain producing 10,000 pounds of flour.”* The Pre-Millennial brethren, as will appear later, are keen for *literal* interpretation. Did Irenaeus get this straight from Polycarp, and did Polycarp get it directly from John, and did Christ teach John that in the Millennium one grain of wheat would yield 500,000,000 tons of flour? And, one is tempted to ask, would our Pre-Millennial brethren be willing to follow Irenaeus and Justin

*Irenaeus, Ad. Her. V:33.

Martyr just as implicitly in *all* their teachings as they do in their teaching concerning the Second Coming?

The following facts are set down for those who wish to make a more extensive study of the history of Pre-Millennialism. Pre-Millennialism is approved by the Jewish Talmud, which also limits the resurrection to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. It was held by the Ebionites who were enemies of the early Church. Caius, a Roman Presbyter, of the second century says that "the Thousand Years" Kingdom was a vain fable invented by the heretic Cerinthus. Origen condemns this "Jewish interpretation" of Scripture. Dionysius of Alexandria, Apollinaris, and Basil condemned it. Augustine condemns it.* The the great ecclesiastical confessions condemn it. Pre-Millennialism was condemned in the original articles of the Church of England in these words:— "They that go about to renew the fable of the heretics called the Millennarii, be repugnant to Holy Scripture, and cast themselves headlong into a Jewish dotage."† The Augsburg Confession condemned it.‡ The Swiss Confession condemned it.§ The Westminster Standards condemned it. Pre-Millennialism was not advocated by any writer of repute in the 16th century. Luther and Melancthon condemned it. Of the great names of the later centuries in the field of theology the Pre-Millennialists claim the greater number as representative of their doctrine. Among those who are declared to have

*Civ. Dei, XX:7.

†Art. XLI.

‡Art. XVII.

§Art. XI.

avored this view is John Calvin. Let us get his opinion of this view before us in his own words. He says:— "Not long after (the days of Paul) arose the Millennarians, who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years. Their fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation."* Other theologians are claimed by the Pre-Millennialists, as advocates of their view, who have clearly declared themselves as opponents of Pre-Millennialism. This is the result either of ignorance or of a deliberate attempt to misrepresent the facts. Either is inexcusable, and the latter is reprehensible. The final court of appeal is the Word of God. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."

*Calvin's Institutes, Vol. II, Book III, Chap. XXV, Sec. V, 1902 Ed.

IV. HAS PRE-MILLENNIALISM A SCRIPTURAL BASIS?

There is a serious error into which Pre-Millennialists have fallen which we need to be careful to avoid in our investigation of the teachings of Scripture on this subject. The Pre-Millennialist starts his investigation with the conviction that Christ is to return to the earth to reign in person upon a material throne for a thousand years. This is his conception of the nature of the Second Coming. He finds in Scripture *one passage* which seems to him to support this view. Upon this passage he founds his doctrine, and then he reads all the inferences he is able to draw from that passage back into every passage in which there is any reference to the Second Coming. That is, he regards *all* the passages which speak of the Second Coming at all as evidence that his own particular conception of the time and circumstances of the Second Coming is correct. This is the mistake made by Mr. Sunday. In his sermon on the Second Coming he says:— "The Second Coming of Christ is the emphatic doctrine of the New Testament. It is mentioned and referred to more than three hundred and fifty times, and yet the majority of church members never heard a sermon on the subject; that is the reason they think so little of looking into the matter themselves."*

The impression given is that there are three hun-

*Mr. Sunday, *Sermon on the Second Coming*, p. 6.

dred and fifty passages in the New Testament which teach the *Pre-Millennial view* of the Second Coming, and that the ministers have been unfaithful in delivering the message. Is it the *Pre-Millennial view* of the Second Coming, or is it the *Second Coming* that is presented so often? It is one thing to preach the doctrine of the Second Coming; it is quite another thing to preach the Pre-Millennial view of that event. Mr. Sunday implies, he practically asserts, that no one has ever heard the doctrine of the Second Coming preached except from the lips of a Pre-Millennialist. One soon learns not to expect accuracy from Mr. Sunday, but such a statement as he makes is nothing less than absurd. The doctrine of the Second Coming is the heart of every evangelical sermon.

The mention of the Millennium, that is, of a period of a *thousand years* during which the saints are to reign with Christ, occurs in but *one* passage of Scripture—not in three hundred and fifty passages. The more intelligent Pre-Millennialists admit that their whole theory rests ultimately upon this one passage. "This is the seat of the doctrine."*

*Bickersteth: Guide p. 248.

V. REVELATION XX: 4-6.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

The whole controversy hinges on the interpretation of this passage. Is the resurrection which is here spoken of to be a *literal* or a *figurative* resurrection? Will there be a bodily resurrection of *some* of the righteous, at least a thousand years before the resurrection of the last great day? Pre-Millennialists insist upon a literal interpretation of this passage. Literalness pervades the whole Pre-Millennial system. They are driven to it in order to maintain the semblance of consistency. And they cling to it even when it forces them to teach the monstrous doctrine that, in the Millennium, the bloody sacrifices of the Old Dispensation will be offered for sin.

Now there are certain presumptions against the literal interpretation of this passage in Revelation, and

they ought to be noted before the proof is adduced to show that a literal interpretation destroys the harmony of Scripture. First of all, if it be true, as Mr. Sunday affirms, that the Second Coming of Christ is mentioned more than three hundred and fifty times in the New Testament, is it not strange that only *one* passage should even hint at this important aspect of the Second Coming? Again, such an interpretation necessitates a belief in at least *two* physical resurrections. Scripture never speaks of two deaths or of two resurrections, *in the same sense*.

Furthermore, if the Pre-Millennial view of the Second Coming is to be regarded as a doctrine of revelation, we have a right to expect that somewhere in Scripture there will be found a clear and unambiguous statement of the doctrine. The Pre-Millennialist will reply:—"Revelation XX:4-6 is a clear and unambiguous statement." But manifestly it is not. If it is a clear and unambiguous statement of the Pre-Millennial doctrine, how does it come that it has never found its way into the creed of the Church? How does it come that the ablest theologians of the Christian era have rejected it? How does it come that Pre-Millennialists differ so widely among themselves as to the import of the passage? That they do differ among themselves is a fact that cannot be denied. Some say that only the martyrs are to be raised at the beginning of the Millennium; others include the faithful witnesses of all previous ages. Mr. Sunday limits this resurrection to those who have laid down their lives between Pentecost and the "Rapture." Some contend that the saints will reign with Christ "in the air"; others are just as certain that Christ and

the saints will reign in visible form at Jerusalem. If this passage is to be regarded as a clear statement of the Pre-Millennial view, the Pre-Millennialists at least ought themselves to be able to agree as to its import. Suppose, for a moment, that the doctrine of the resurrection itself rested upon such an insecure foundation, what would it be worth to the believer?

These considerations do not of course, constitute absolute proof that the literal interpretation of the passage is wrong. They are not presented as *proof*. They are presented as presumptions of which every student of the passage will do well to take note. The *proof* is furnished by the internal evidence, and by other portions of Scripture which throw light upon the entire passage.

It is admitted that if we interpret this passage *literally*, we are shut up to the conclusion that there will be a physical resurrection of some of the saints one thousand years before the general resurrection. But if we are to understand the resurrection as a literal, bodily resurrection, we must, in accordance with sound principles of interpretation, regard the whole context literally. If the "resurrection" is literal, the "thousand years" must be regarded as ten hundred years of three hundred and sixty-five days each. The reign of Christ and of the saints will thus be *limited*. It will come to an end at a given time. Christ and the saints will give way to the reign of Satan "for a little time" at least.

Not to raise the question of the time when Christ shall *begin* to reign, Scripture teaches that when Christ does take the throne he will sit upon it *forever*. "Of the increase of his government and of

peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever.”* Again, we may inquire, what becomes of these saints whose bodies are said to be raised, when the end of the Millennium comes? If they cease at this time to *reign* with Christ, they must also cease to *live*—for both reigning and living are limited to “a thousand years.”

Then there is the expression “the souls of them that had been *beheaded*.” If the “resurrection” is literal, and if the “thousand years” are literal years, the “beheading” must be literal. Are we to conclude that only those who have been “beheaded” are to be raised up at this time? If so it will be a very limited number. The Pre-Millennialist, however, points to the further description that is given—“such as worshipped not the beast (a literal “*beast*”?), neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand.” This, he says, includes more than the number of those who were “beheaded” as martyrs. But does it not become *too inclusive* to suit the Pre-Millennial view? Does it not include *all* the saints who die before the “Rapture?” Can we believe that *any* man is ever to be raised in glory who receives the “mark of the beast” in his forehead? Is it not true of *every* witness for Christ that he “received not the mark of the beast in his forehead?” So if the passage be interpreted literally, either those alone shall be raised to reign with Christ in the Millennium who have been “beheaded” as witnesses, or *all* the saints, irrespective of the manner of their

*Isa. IX:7.

death, will be raised. Either one of these interpretations is fatal to the Pre-Millennial view. For example, Mr. Sunday, when he preached on this subject in Pittsburgh, said that he expected to participate in the Millennial reign. As a pleasantry, of course, he remarked:— “Perhaps the Lord will say to me ‘Bill, you go back and reign over that Pittsburgh bunch.’” Dismissing the question of taste, what ground has Mr. Sunday for any hope that he will be allowed to participate in the Millennial reign? Not *all* the saints will be raised. He himself has settled that question. But, as we have shown above, either *all* will be raised or only those who have been “*beheaded*” as witnesses. To these are to be added any saints who may still be on earth, when the “Rapture” takes place. Mr. Sunday rejects the interpretation that *all* will be raised; we cannot believe that he hopes to be “*beheaded*”; and even Lloyds would refuse to write him a policy with the “Rapture” as the *terminus ad quem*.

Moreover, if we interpret this passage literally and read into it nothing more than John has said, where is there any mention of a *bodily* resurrection? John says he saw the “*souls*” and “they lived.” It is not at all necessary, according to the Christian faith, to conclude that because the *soul* is alive that the *body* has been raised. “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Lazarus and Abraham were “living” in glory but their bodies are still in the dust. John is speaking of “*souls*” and he says “they lived,” not that they “*began* to live.” It is hard to see how a literalist (and all Pre-Millennialists are literalists), can conjure the idea of a physical resurrection from this passage.

There is also a problem for the literalist in the word "judgment." What is meant by "judgment"? If we use the book of Revelation as a commentary, we may discover the meaning in Rev. VI:9,—
"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony they held: and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

The "souls" of these martyrs cried for vengeance upon those that had slain them. And it may be noted in passing, these "souls" were alive even before the mention of the Millennium in chapter XX. Now in chapter XX "Judgment was given unto them." If the "judgment" that was given unto them is to be interpreted as literal vengeance upon those who shed the blood of these saints when they were in the flesh, and if the saints are to be raised and clothed with physical bodies in order that they may inflict that vengeance upon their executioners, does it not follow that the erstwhile executioners themselves must be raised at the same time, so that they may become the objects of the literal vengeance? If Paul is to be raised up to take vengeance upon his executioner, does it not follow that Nero will have to be raised as well as Paul? If Nero is not to be raised, it were better for Paul to remain in the spirit world where his opportunities for taking vengeance on the disembodied spirit of Nero would be vastly superior. But the Pre-Millennialist denies that any *wicked* men are to be raised at the beginning of the Millennium.

Any student of the Book of Revelation ought to

know that when he begins to interpret it literally he is on dangerous ground. Revelation is the "picture book" of the Bible and we cannot interpret Scripture by the pictures; we must rather interpret the pictures by Scripture. The difficulties in the way of a *literal* interpretation of this passage are insurmountable.

On the other hand a *figurative* interpretation harmonizes completely with all other scripture. John is speaking of martyrs who were faithful and who were slain for the testimony which they held. While in the flesh they had been quickened by the Spirit, they had participated in the "first resurrection"—they had passed from spiritual death unto spiritual life. They were possessors of eternal life. John saw these "souls," and he saw that "they lived." They were not in the body. John does not say that he saw them in bodily form. They were living "*souls*" before the throne of Christ. It is plain that they had had a part in the first resurrection, an experience without which it is impossible to be a believer at all. Now Regeneration, as everybody knows, is referred to frequently in the New Testament under the figure of the "Resurrection." Romans VI:4,—"*We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*" Paul, who was then living, wrote to the Christian Romans, who were then living, "*We were buried with him through baptism unto death . . . that we might walk (now) in newness of life.*" Paul and these Romans had never experienced physical death but they had been "*raised*" to "*newness of life*" through Christ. He speaks also of the

gathering in of the Gentiles as "life from the dead." He can mean nothing other than their conversion. Col. III:1,—*"If you then were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God."* How shall we understand the language of Christ in the parable of the Prodigal Son unless we interpret it figuratively.—*"This my son was dead and is alive again."*

Or turn to John V:25. Christ says:—*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."* Notice that expression, *"and now is."* Christ is speaking of a resurrection—the "first resurrection"—which was *then taking place* in the lives of those that were being born into the Kingdom. Peter and James and John experienced "the first resurrection." But they were to die—they were to taste of physical death. When they died, however, the "second death," spiritual death, had no power over them, because they had triumphed over spiritual death in the "first resurrection." Now the "souls" which John saw in his vision were "souls" which had experienced the "first resurrection." He says of these souls, *"they lived and reigned."* This explains the meaning of the "first resurrection."

Then he says, *"The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished."* "The rest of the dead," manifestly, are the wicked. The implication is that *they* were to live again when "the thousand years should be finished."

They must "live," however, in the same sense in which the "souls" that John saw are said to live. The original word is the same in both expressions. The

two expressions "lived" and "lived not" are in contrast. There must be some sense in which the term "lived" is equally applicable to both righteous and wicked.

Now what does John mean when he says that certain "souls" "lived" and the "rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished"? What is the import of the word "lived" in these expressions? The Pre-Millennialist says that in the first instance it means that the souls "lived," i. e., they were rehabilitated with a physical body and dwelt on earth. But if it means a physical resurrection in the first instance, it must mean that the same thing will take place in the experience of the "rest of the dead" when "the thousand years should be finished." "The rest of the dead," the wicked, must be raised from the dead at the close of the Millennium, at the beginning of the "little season" for which Satan is to be loosed. But that does not fit into the Pre-Millennial scheme. While the Pre-Millennialists feel at liberty to arrange for *any number* of resurrections of the *righteous*, they hold firmly to the belief that there will be but *one* resurrection for the *wicked* and that it will not come until *after* the "little season." So a literal interpretation of this word "lived" brings the Pre-Millennialist into conflict with himself. That, of course, is no novel experience for the Pre-Millennialist but it is fatal to his theory. If, as the Pre-Millennialist teaches, this passage affirms a physical resurrection of the *righteous*, or of some of them, at the *beginning* of the Millennium, then it affirms just as clearly that there will be a physical resurrection of the *wicked* at the *close* of the Millennium and some time at least before the general resurrection.

Thus while the figurative interpretation of the passage makes havoc of the Pre-Millennial scheme, even the literal interpretation is not consistent with it. And for the simple reason that the literal interpretation requires an extra resurrection of the wicked for which the Pre-Millennial programme has not as yet been able to provide. The figurative interpretation makes sense and harmonizes with the rest of Scripture; the literal does neither.

Let us understand the word "lived," in both instances, as a *figurative* expression. John, in vision, is looking down through the ages to come. He is speaking of disembodied spirits. He speaks, first of all, of the spirits of just men made perfect. He says, "they lived and reigned." He does not mean merely that they were alive, that they were still in existence. There would be no point in making such a statement about an immortal soul. Nor does he mean merely that these "souls" had been regenerated. He means that they become active in a new sphere. They "reign." How? By controlling the lives of men who are in the flesh. The spirit of these martyrs and witnesses is revived in living men, and these living men, in turn, become the dominant influence in the world. John saw "thrones," not *one* throne but *many*. The spirit of these martyrs is reproduced in the hearts of men on earth. Those hearts become their "thrones." Such an interpretation accords perfectly with the words of the angel to Zacharias concerning John the Baptist:— "And he (John the Baptist) shall go before his (Christ's) face in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him."* And

*Luke I:17.

Christ himself said of John the Baptist:— “And if ye are willing to receive it, this *is* Elijah, that is to come.”* These passages show how the spirit of a departed saint may “reign” in the lives of men still in the flesh. John the Baptist wrought in the “spirit and power of Elijah.” Elijah “lived and reigned” in John the Baptist. But Elijah was not re-incarnated to do it. John the Baptist did not lose his identity. John was not Elijah, but he had Elijah’s “spirit and power,” and the influence which he exerted was the influence which Elijah would have exerted if he had been the immediate fore-runner of Christ.

And all through the centuries this conception has obtained. John Huss suffered martyrdom in A.D. 1415. In 1522 Pope Adrian addressed a letter to the Diet of Nuremberg, in which he said:— “The Heretics Huss and Jerome are now *alive again* in the person of Martin Luther.” Any one who can understand figurative language at all knows what he meant. He did not mean that Huss and Jerome had been raised from the dead and that they were again in the flesh. They could not *both* be Martin Luther even if they were. He meant that the spirit which animated John Huss and Jerome “lived” again in Martin Luther. John, in his vision, sees a time to come when the spirit of the martyrs would have the ascendancy. It would be the regnant spirit of the age. That is what John saw, *stated positively*.

Now, in the same sense of the word, he says, stating the matter negatively:— “The rest of the dead *lived not* until the thousand years should be finished.” He means that the spirit of men who had

*Matt. XI:14.

exerted an influence for evil in the world did *not* "live" during the thousand years. Men in the flesh during the Millennium refused to be animated by the spirit of men such as Balaam and Judas and Herod. That is what makes the thousand years a period of peace and progress. Wickedness is quiescent. Righteousness is active and dominant. *After* the thousand years, however, John sees a time when the spirit of these unregenerate men shall again live and reign in the earth.

This is the sense of the word which is made the basis of the contrast between "lived" and "lived not." But regeneration is the test which determines whether departed spirits "live" or "live not" during the millennium. Regeneration, therefore, as "the first resurrection," underlies the whole passage; but the immediate reference is not to the *characters* but to the *activities* of the departed righteous and the departed wicked in their influence on men's lives.

Note how this harmonizes with what John says concerning Satan. In vs. 3, he says that Satan was cast into the abyss, "that he should deceive the nations no more, *until* the thousand years should be finished." Then he says, (vv. 7-8.) "And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations." "*Until*" implies that a time is coming when Satan shall resume his former vocation. In like manner "the rest of the dead live not *until* the thousand years should be finished" and then, as the analogy proves, they *do* live, just as Satan again "deceives." The spirit of unrighteousness is regnant now. It will cease to reign for "a thousand years." Then it will reign once more.

Again, John describes the binding of Satan. He

says, (vs. 1) "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him."

Of course the Pre-Millennialist interprets this *literally*. This is the only way he can get any real comfort out of it. According to the Pre-Millennials an angel takes an iron key and a great chain, a *great* chain, presumably an anchor chain, forged in the Carnegie Steel Mills, and he ties Satan up tight with the chain and then he puts Satan into an abyss that has a lid on it; he clamps down the lid and then solders it all the way around. Satan is bound so tightly that he cannot even turn over to warm the other side.

How feeble the intellect that is satisfied with a *literal* interpretation of this passage must be! Where does the Bible teach that Satan is confined to a physical body that may be effectually bound by a material chain? How long would a metal lid, even if expertly soldered, confine the Prince of the power of the air? Do Pre-Millennialists lock their doors and windows to keep Satan out? If they do, it is to be feared that most of them have left the weather-strips off their study windows.

Satan is to be bound, but how? With "seven green withes that were never dried"?* Surely Satan is as strong as Samson. How is Satan bound? Christ went back to Nazareth to teach. Matthew says:—"And he did not many mighty works there because of

*Judges XVI:7.

their unbelief.”* Christ, to use the figurative language of Revelation, was “bound” by unbelief in the hearts of those whom he taught. Unbelief rendered even the power of Christ abortive, at least for the time being. Similarly Satan is “bound” by the faith of good men. The thing that renders Satan powerless is moral rectitude in the human heart. Whenever men, through the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul, set before themselves the immaculate standard of righteousness that is contained in the ten commandments, and agonize day and night to be perfect even as their Father in heaven is perfect, Satan is “bound” in so far as those lives are concerned—bound with infrangible chains and locked in his own place. Satan might go to and fro in the earth but as far as Job’s influence was concerned, Satan was “bound.” Stalwart Christian character, unyielding, peacefully invincible, renders Satan impotent. And when the spirit of Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel, and Isaiah, and Daniel, and Paul, and Stephen, lives and reigns in the lives of men, Satan will continue to be “bound” as long as that condition prevails. But when the spirit of Cain and Balaam and Judas and Nero again becomes dominant in the earth, Satan will be “loosed.” The reign of regenerate spirits constitutes the Millennium. The reign of unregenerate spirits brings it to an end. But it has been shown above that Christ speaks of *regeneration* as a “*resurrection*.” He sets this resurrection over against another—a physical resurrection. In the mind of Christ, therefore, regeneration is the “first resurrection.” John describes the Millennium by saying, “This is the first resurrection.” The Millennium

*Matt. XIII:58.

is the manifestation of the power of regenerate spirits. It is the reign of the spirit of righteousness. It is so absolutely dependent upon the "first resurrection" that the two may be identified, and John may say of the Millennium, "*This* is the first resurrection." This is the outcome of it. This is the time when the spirits of regenerate "souls" live and reign" in the lives of the inhabitants of earth. And then he adds: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

This, then, is the passage upon which Pre-Millennialists have grounded their system, if it may be called a system. The passage contains no suggestion of a material throne at Jerusalem, or anywhere else. It does not even intimate that Christ is ever to return to earth in bodily form to rule over men in the flesh. Even if interpreted literally it is seen to be in conflict with the Pre-Millennial view. A literal interpretation of the passage involves contradictions of the clearest teachings of Scripture. The whole Pre-Millennial movement has been a pitiful attempt to read a narrow, selfish, materialistic Jewish dream into the pages of the New Testament. It is fore-doomed to failure.

WHAT THE PRE-MILLENNIAL VIEW INVOLVES.

If Pre-Millennialism involved nothing more than a belief that the Second Coming of Christ will precede the Millennium, while we could not agree with that view, we might dismiss it as a harmless hallucination. But it involves vastly more. Pre-Millennialism represents a school of interpretation. The view of the Pre-Millennialists respecting the relative time of the

Second Coming is only a starting point. In their efforts to harmonize their view with the teachings of Scripture they are compelled to pervert or reject many of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. That is a strong statement, but it is not stronger than the evidence warrants. Their view cannot be harmonized with Scripture, consequently they are under the necessity of adjusting Scripture to harmonize with their view. The implications of this theory, as it touches the doctrines of the general resurrection and the general judgment, have been before us in the preceding pages.

VI. PRE-MILLENNIALISM PERVERTS THE SCRIPTURAL TEACHING CONCERNING THE UNITY OF THE BODY OR BRIDE OF CHRIST.

THE Bible teaches that the church, the mystical body of Christ, will be *complete* at his coming. Pre-Millennialists, as a class, teach that the church, the mystical body of Christ, will *not* be complete at his coming. The pronouncement of Scripture on this point is so plain that some Pre-Millennialists admit that the Bible declares that Christ's mystical body will be complete at his coming. It becomes their problem therefore to account for the generations of saved men who are to people the earth *during* the Millennium. If Christ's mystical body is complete at his coming, and if, as they believe, men are to be saved *after* Christ comes, how are these redeemed men to find a place in the body that was already complete when they were born? To escape this contradiction they attempt to distinguish between the "body" of Christ and the "saved." *All* believers, they say, are *saved*, but *not all* believers belong to the *mystical body* of Christ. This is the distinction Mr. Sunday makes. He says:—"The body of Christ will be composed of believers of every race and nation on earth . . . not from every dispensation. It had its beginning on the day of Pentecost, and will be complete at the time of the meeting in the air, which is called the Rapture."*

*Mr. Sunday, *Second Coming*, pp. 14-15.

The body of Christ, according to this statement, is to be composed only of those who have been saved between the time of Pentecost and the "Rapture." Moses and Elijah and John the Baptist will not be a part of the body of Christ.

But, it may be objected, this is an extreme view which few Pre-Millennialists hold. On the contrary it is the view of the vast majority of Pre-Millennialists. It is essential to their system. According to Pre-Millennialism the body of Christ is to be complete at the "Rapture." The "Rapture" is to take place *before* the Millennium. *During* the Millennium men are to be regenerated and saved. Men who are saved during the Millennium or after it will, therefore, have no part in the body of Christ. Now there are two facts which Scripture makes so plain that they may be said to be emphasized. One of these facts is that the Church, the mystical body of Christ, comprises the *whole number* of the saved. The other is that this mystical body will be *complete* at his Second Coming.

Let us get before us the passages which contain the evidence on these points. I Cor. XV:23:— (where Paul is speaking of the resurrection of Christ and of believers) "But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming." How many are included in that expression, "they that are Christ's"? Is *any* believer of *any* age excluded? Will any one presume to place any limit upon its scope, except the limit of the number of the redeemed?

II Thes. I:10,— " . . . when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in

all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day." Here we have the mention of the Second Coming and a specific mention of "*all*" "that believed." Pre-Millennialism is built upon a *literal* interpretation of Scripture. It insists upon a literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation which is predominantly figurative. Certainly it is not asking too much of the advocates of such a method of interpretation to interpret the "*all*" of this text literally. There is no figure in the word "*all*."

Eph. V:25—27,— "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Eph. I:22—23,— "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the *church*, which is *his body*, the *fulness of him*, that filleth all in all."

Col. I:18,— "And he is the head of the *body*, the *church*: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence.

The church invisible is the bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife. The church is his body. The body is *one* body. Christ has but one Bride. He is no bigamist. "The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered

into one under Christ the head." At least that is the conclusion of the Westminster divines.*

There may be Pre-Millennialists who would be unwilling to affirm that Christ has two brides, but there is no escape from such an affirmation if the Pre-Millennial view be accepted at all. If there is to be a "secret rapture" a thousand years before the general resurrection, and if Christ comes for his bride *before* the Millennium, there must in the very necessity of the case be a pre-millennial marriage. But in Rev. XXI:2 we have the new Jerusalem presented to Christ as a bride to her husband. Here is a *second marriage* of Christ to a bride, if the Pre-Millennialist's view be approved.

There is nothing in this to disconcert the Pre-Millennialist. He boldly avows that there will be two marriages and two brides. In the "Prophetic Conference" held at Mildmay Park, England, in 1878, the Rev. John Wilkinson said:— "The King of the Jews is Head and Bridegroom of the church. There is going to be another marriage, and we must rejoice at it.I think that we have two brides—the church linked to Christ in resurrection life, and the Jewish people married to the Lord as a nation. Thus we have two brides; but if I have to give up one, it would be the church.†

And in the New York Prophetic Conference of the same year, Bishop Nicholson described the literal Israel as constituting, during millennial times, a body separate and distinct from the church, and en-

*Larger Catechism, Question 64.

†Mildmay Addresses, pp. 106, 205-6.

joying a high degree of the divine favor and honor.*

The Rev. W. Kelly teaches that the church will be complete at the rapture of the saints, which will precede, by a considerable interval, the commencement of the millennium; that after the rapture of the saints, no additions to the church will be made; that those who shall afterward be *converted* will constitute *a body different from the church*, and will form no part of the bridal company of the redeemed; and that the millennial converts *will not be Christians*. He says:— “There will not be a single Christian (properly speaking) among them.” He also teaches that during the millennium the Jews will be nearer to Christ, “Israel being in the inner circle and the Gentiles in the outer.”†

Seiss teaches that the pre-millennial saints, *exclusive* of millennial converts, are the elect and bride of Christ.‡

James Smith of Scotland, says:— “The millenians can be neither saints, martyrs nor the church... the church is fully completed without them and all before the millennium.”§ “There will not be a single Christian” among the converts of the Millennium!! How then can they *be* converts? Saved but not Christian!! Acts IV:12,—“And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name

*N. Y. Prophetic Conference, pp. 60-64.

†Lec. on Sec. Coming, pp. 279-280. Lect. on Rev. p. 131. Second Coming, pp. 328, 376.

‡*The Last Times*, pp. 217-224.

§Sealed Books, pp. 329, 425.

††For an admirable discussion of this point, see McDill, *Pre-Millennialism Discussed*, in loc.

under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

Jewish converts in one body; Gentile converts in another body, and these separate bodies the *brides* of Christ!! *And both of them* living!! Will they make our Lord a polygamist? Will they brand him as a Latter Day Saint?

I Cor. XII:13,—“For in *one* Spirit were we all baptized into *one* body, *whether Jews or Greeks*, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of *one* Spirit.”

Rom. XII:5,—“So we, who are many, are *one* body in Christ, and severally members one of another.”

Col. III:15,— “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in *one* body.”

Where in all the range of revelation is there a suggestion of *two* bodies which are to be brides of Christ? Pre-Millennialism, at this point, is dangerously near to the blasphemies of Mormonism.

The union of all believers with Christ is the same in essence. Are we to believe that there will be some *believers* who will *not be admitted* to the *mystical body* of Christ? Is that Christ's design? Does it harmonize with that intercessory prayer which was offered for all believers in all ages?

John XVII:11,— “Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be *one*, even as we are. (20-21). Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may *all* be *one*; even

as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

"That they *all* may be ONE"!! That they may all be one in the same sense that the Father and Son are one. Is there an "inner" and an "outer" circle in the Godhead? What folly, what silly twaddle, to presume to run a line of cleavage between the redeemed in glory for whom Christ prayed that they "*all* may be *one*"! How can the redeemed be *one* with Christ and not belong to his mystical body? Is there to be an eternal distinction between the saints in glory, determined by the *time* of their conversion or the *manner* of their testimony for Christ? Are the physical characteristics of race to persist in the spirits of "just men made perfect"? Will these things outweigh the fervent prayer of Christ that all the redeemed shall be one even as he is one with his eternal Father? Is that Scriptural? Is it satisfying to the student of the word of God? Is it rational? If there were no other objectionable element in the Pre-Millennial view, this should be sufficient to condemn it.

But there are further implications which are no less condemnatory.

VII. PRE-MILLENNIALISTS DENY THE DOCTRINE OF A GENERAL JUDGMENT.

WE have just seen that the Pre-Millennialist would have us believe that there are *two* resurrections (at least two), separated in time by at least a thousand years, and that Christ will have *two* brides.

The Pre-Millennialist also affirms that there will be *two* separate judgments. That is to say, the Pre-Millennialist *denies* that there will be one, general judgment of the righteous and the wicked. The earlier Pre-Millennialists recognized the fact that their theory was in conflict with Scripture at this point, and they sought to escape the conflict by making the judgment *continuous* from the time of the "Rapture" to the "last" judgment, which they find described in the latter part of Rev. XX. This was Mede's way out of the difficulty.*

But Modern Pre-Millennialists are not so easily disturbed by a conflict with Scripture. They revel in judgments. They arrange for a judgment every once in a while.

"W. E. B.," in his book on *Jesus is Coming*, says: — "We often hear Post-Millennialists use the expression 'General Judgment,' thereby conveying the idea of some future day in which all mankind will simultaneously appear before God to be judged. The expression is not in the Scriptures. Pre-Millennialists

*Mede's *Works*, pp. 763, 841.

believe that the Judgment is general, *only* in the sense that all are judged—but *not all at the same time*. . . . there will be four visible judgments, in the following order: I. The Judgment of the Saints for their works. II. The Judgment of the living nations, who are upon the earth at the Revelation. Then follows the Millennium, which is one continuous day of Judgment. III. The Judgment of the dead at the Great White Throne. IV. The Judgment of angels, into fire 'prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*

The Scriptures teach that there will be a general judgment at a fixed time, and that at that time *all* the dead, both righteous and wicked, shall be raised up to receive judgment according to their deeds. The Scriptures teach, moreover, that this day will mark the Second Coming of Christ. The attention of the reader is directed to the following passages of Scripture:

Christ says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."†

In this passage the original word is *᥄ρα* "the hour cometh." It is the same word which Christ uses in John XII:27, when he is looking forward to that awful moment upon the cross, where for the moment,

**Jesus is Coming*, pp. 101-106. This quotation is from the Third Revision of the book, Copyright, 1908. This book has the hearty endorsement of R. A. Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman, A. T. Pierson, L. W. Munhall, D. M. Stearns, James M. Gray, Prof. W. G. Moorehead, A. B. Simpson, John Willis Baer, Robert E. Speer, and others. One wonders if they ever *read* the book.

†John V:28-29.

and only for the moment, the Father's face was to be turned away, and in contemplation of the suffering of that moment he cries out:— "Father, save me from this *hour*." There are other words in Greek which denote "age-long duration," or "time unlimited," but this word denotes a definite *point* of time. It marks a moment of time that is as definitely and as irrevocably fixed as the hour of the tragedy on Golgotha. Not only is there one *day* of judgment in which the righteous and the wicked shall be judged, but there is an "hour" when that judgment shall be pronounced which shall determine the eternal destiny of every man.

Paul says:— "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

Paul affirms that there is a time, *an appointed day*, when the whole world shall be judged. This appointed day is set, as the context shows, for the judgment of "all everywhere." It would be hard to construct a statement that would be more specific or more inclusive. It would be harder still to reconcile this statement with the "four judgments" of "W. E. B.," or even with the *two* judgments of the more rational Pre-Millennialists.

Any view which regards the judgment as an event that will continue for a millennium, or which requires

*Acts XVII:30-31.

us to believe that there will be successive judgments, separated by a millennium, or by any other period of time, or which fixes the time of the judgment at any other moment than the final appearing of Christ, in the Second Coming at the end of the world, is diametrically opposed to the Word of God. It has been shown that all of these things may be charged against Pre-Millennialism. It is, therefore, unscriptural.

VIII. PRE-MILLENNIALISM POSITS THE RESTORATION OF MATERIAL SACRIFICES.

IF the reader has access to the diagram which is prepared by G. Campbell Morgan, he may note that a red line is drawn across the period covered by the Old Dispensation, and that it terminates at the Crucifixion. From this point to the "Rapture," or to the beginning of the Millennium, the red line disappears. In the period of the Millennium, however, the red line re-appears. This red line, in this diagram, represents the bloody sacrifice of the Old Dispensation. The re-appearance of this red line in the Millennium is a declaration that the Temple service, with all its appointments, with the veil, the holy place, the holy of holies, the altars, and with the sacrifices of rams and goats and bullocks and pigeons, will again be set up in Jerusalem. It signifies a belief that the priests of the order of Aaron will stand again at the altars to offer material sacrifices for their own sins and for the sins of the people. That is Pre-Millennialism, as set forth by the ablest and sanest of its advocates.

One cannot but think that it was with much serious misgiving that this popular and, in many respects, able expositor drew the red line through the period of the Millennium, thus indicating the return of the New Testament church to the "weak and beggarly elements." Why did he do it? He did it because this is the logical and inescapable conclusion to which

every man must come who adopts the Pre-millennial view of the Second Coming. There is this to be said for Dr. Morgan, however: he seems to be heartily ashamed of Pre-Millennialism, even though he allows himself to be numbered among its exponents. It will profit the reader to compare the sober statements in Morgan's *Sunrise* with the vacuous ebulliency of "W. E. B." Dr. Morgan is the only Pre-Millennialist whom the writer of this pamphlet has ever heard talk for thirty minutes upon a Bible theme without exploiting his obsession. But the fact remains that it is his conclusion and the conclusion of Pre-Millennialism that *the sacrifices of the Old Dispensation will again be offered for sin.*

It will be sufficient to point the reader to some passages of Scripture which are absolutely irreconcilable with such a view.

Eph. II:13-16, "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." "The law of commandments contained in ordinances" was abolished by Christ upon the cross—abolished *forever*.

Or turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews. The whole argument of the epistle is designed to show that the types of the Old Dispensation had served their purpose, and that with the coming of Christ there was "a

disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.”* The “commandment” concerned “carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.”† The commandment as to the observance of the ordinances of the sanctuary was “*disannulled*,” because of “*its weakness and unprofitableness*.” What reason have we to expect that it will be restored?

But let us look at Chapter X, where the evidence is absolutely conclusive. (I use italics in place of extended comment.)

“For the law having a *shadow* of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. . . . *For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.* Wherefore when *he* cometh into the world, he saith,

*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,
But a body didst thou prepare for me;
In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices
for sin thou hadst no pleasure:*

Then said I, Lo, *I* am come
(In the roll of the book it is written of me)

To do thy will, O God.

Saying above, *Sacrifices and offerings and*

*Heb. VII:18-19.

†Heb. IX:10.

whole burnt offerings for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. *He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.* By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all.* And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, *the which can never take away sins:* but *he*, when he had offered *one sacrifice* for sins *for ever*, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by *one offering* he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said,

This is the covenant that I will make with them

After those days, saith the Lord:

I will put my laws on their heart,

And upon their mind also will I write them; then saith he,

And their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.

Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

In all time, and in all eternity, there shall never again be offered a bloody sacrifice that is acceptable to God. "*There is no more offering for sins.*" Henceforth "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A

broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”* Could language make it plainer?

Paul’s language in the Epistle to the Galatians is peculiarly applicable to the Pre-Millennialists at this point.

“So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods: but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, *how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again?*”†

There are just two sects that look for the re-establishment of the Old Testament sacrifices: One of these is composed of orthodox, unconverted Jews; the other comprises the Pre-Millennialists. Both are in essential opposition to the whole tenor and import of the New Testament, as well as to the most specific, the most explicit, and the most perspicuous statements that have ever issued from the pen of inspiration.

*Ps. LI:17.

†Gal. IV:3-9.

IX. PRE-MILLENNIALISM INVOLVES A SECOND HUMILIATION OF CHRIST.

PAUL, after he has described the humiliation of Christ in that classical passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, says: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

This looks forward to the time when all things shall be "subjected to him." "But now we see not yet all things subjected to him."† A time of restoration is contemplated. And Peter says of Christ in view of this restoration, "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things."‡

The days of Christ's humiliation are ended. His ascension was followed by the enthronement. He sits today upon the great white throne. He is clothed with majesty and with power. Around about that throne ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands are saying with a great voice:—"Unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory,

*Philipp. II:9-11.

†Heb. II:8.

‡Acts III:21.

and the dominion, for ever and ever.”* That throne shall never be vacant. That song of praise shall never cease. “Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.† Christ has been exalted. It is the divine decree that he shall sit at the Father’s right hand until every enemy has been put under his feet.

Now the Pre-Millennial doctrine is that Christ is to *leave* his place upon the throne, that he is to descend to earth and sit upon a *material* throne which is to be located at Jerusalem, and that from that throne he is to reign over men who are in the flesh, over men who will refuse to recognize him as King, who will scoff and mock and shout with scorn, “Hail! thou King of the Jews.” Pre-Millennialism teaches that the enthroned Mediator is to ride forth to battle with the hosts of wickedness; that he is to sit upon a horse and ride at the head of his troops in a great battle and that after a thousand years of triumph he shall see Satan mount the throne and rule over the world for “a little season.” It teaches that Christ must yet win his kingdom in a terrific battle in which he shall again be exposed to the darts and slings and spears of the enemy. It teaches that the saints shall go forth with him into this conflict to wield material weapons against the hosts of Satan.

It cannot be so. “Put up thy sword” is what the Scripture teaches. “For our wrestling is *not against flesh and blood*, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness,

*Rev. V:13.

†Ps. CX:1.

against the *spiritual hosts of wickedness* in the heavenly places.”*

The only weapons given to the Church for the subjugation of the world for Christ are the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit. With these, Paul says, “ye shall be able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the evil one.” This is “the whole armor of God.”

Shall Jesus Christ, our exalted Lord, come in bodily form to be the target of the arrows or the bullets of unregenerate men? The gross materialism of the Pre-Millennialist is revolting. The Son of God won the victory on the cross. The last great enemy is overcome. The throne in glory is his, and he shall sit upon it forevermore. The throne of Christ is in the heavens, and “the heavens are higher than the earth.”

Any position which Christ might assume on earth, make it as glorious as the mind can conceive, would be a humiliation. And yet the Pre-Millennialist maintains that Christ is to leave his Mediatorial throne and, with a comparatively few of his saints, rule over a world in which there will be unregenerate men who will oppose his reign. Pre-Millennialists teach that wicked men, in the flesh, are to fight against the Messiah on the throne at Jerusalem.

What kind of a conflict will it be? How long would it last? Who could stand for a moment against his omnipotence? Who could endure the glory of his

*Eph. VI:12.

presence? When he comes in his glory, and he shall never come in any other way, "the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman" shall "hide themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they shall say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?*" How long would the battle of Armageddon last if Jesus Christ in his glorified body and in visible form were to lead the hosts of righteousness?

When John, who *loved* his appearing, saw his glorified Lord he said: "I fell at his feet as one dead."† When the Roman soldiers came to arrest Christ in the Garden, we have this record: "When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground."‡ Will Christ's glory be veiled when he sits on the throne at Jerusalem? If it is veiled, there will be another humiliation. If it is not veiled, what man can endure his presence? A rebel, with uplifted, hostile hand, in that presence is inconceivable. Pre-Millennialism is incompatible with the scriptural doctrine of Christ's exaltation.

*Rev. VI:15-17.

†Rev. I:17.

‡John XVIII:6.

X. PRE-MILLENNIALISM DISHONORS THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IT is not charged that Pre-Millennialists intentionally disparage the work of the Holy Spirit. It is charged that disparagement of the work of the Holy Spirit is essentially involved in the system which Pre-Millennialists hold.

When Christ had finished his work on earth and was about to ascend to the right hand of God, he gave to his disciples the assurance that he would send the Holy Spirit into the world. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Christ said to his disciples:— “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.”*

There is, of course, a wide difference of opinion among scholars as to the exact import of this passage. One thing, however, is plain. Christ affirms that it will work out to the advantage of the disciples and of the world for him to depart in order that the Holy Spirit may come. Christ says, in effect, “I have now finished the work which the Father gave me to do in the world. Atonement has been made. The great

*John XVI:7-11.

work of convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment is yet to be done. But that is a work which does not lie within my province. That work belongs to the Holy Spirit. My work henceforth is at the right hand of God. It is, therefore, profitable for you, and for all the world, that I should depart in order that the Holy Spirit may come to perform his work."

All the work that is done in the world in the redemption of men from sin, from the time of the ascension until the end of time, is done by the Holy Spirit. Every man that is to be saved will be saved because he obeyed the voice of the Spirit, and because the Spirit applied to him the redemption purchased by Christ. Every man who is lost will be lost because he rejected the Holy Spirit. Whatever advancement in righteousness is to be made by the world until the end of time will be the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit. If there is to be a glorious millennium, which is to be characterized by the dominance of righteousness, that millennium will be the result of the labors of the Holy Spirit. It is the reign of the Holy Spirit, not the bodily presence of Christ, that is to characterize the millennium. The Holy Spirit must prepare the heart of every one who is to become a citizen of Christ's kingdom. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."*

The work of the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ are distinct. The work of the Holy Spirit is to convert and sanctify and save men. The work of Christ at his coming is not to convert, sanctify or

*I Cor. XII:3.

save sinners; it is to judge, reward and punish men according to their past. Christ is never represented in Scripture as coming again into the world to persuade men to repent and believe and be saved. The Holy Spirit is represented in Scripture as striving with men, persuading and enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel. That is the Spirit's work. According to the divine plan it was necessary that Christ should be corporeally absent from the world in order that the work of the Spirit might be most effectively done. It is not in place to speculate about the *reason* why this should be so. Christ plainly states that it *is* so.

Now the Scriptures teach that the world is to be converted to Christ. But there is not a word in Scripture to suggest that the world will be converted by Christ at or subsequently to his Second Coming. The world must, therefore, be converted *before* the Second Coming. If the world is to be converted before the Second Coming, it must be converted by the Holy Spirit.

And the world *is* to be converted to Christ. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee."* "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.† Unconverted men cannot serve Christ. If the nations are to serve Christ, the nations must be converted. All conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. The time from Pentecost to the coming of Christ is preëminently the dispensation of the Spirit. It is the

*Ps. XXII:27.

†Isa. XI:9.

time in which the Spirit is to perform his work of bringing the world to Christ.

What is the teaching of Pre-Millennialism on this point? The great mass of Pre-Millennialists believe that the world is not to be converted to Christ at all. Some believe that it will be converted, but not until *after* the coming of Christ. Either of these views involves a disparagement of the work of the Holy Spirit. If we take the view of the majority of Pre-Millennialists, that the world is *not to be converted* to Christ, we must deny the statements of men whom the Holy Spirit inspired to affirm that it would be converted. If we take the view that it *will be* converted, but not until *after the coming of Christ*, we practically declare that the work of the Holy Spirit is a failure, and that Christ must return to do by his corporeal presence what the Spirit, whom he sent into the world to "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," is unable to do. Pre-Millennialists must either deny the truth of what the Holy Spirit has written or they must regard the work of Conversion as about to be taken out of the hands of the Spirit and committed to Christ.

Pre-Millennialists have much to say about the Holy Spirit, but their conclusions give rise to a doubt as to their knowledge of his part in the work of redemption. If we may judge of their knowledge by their theory, they are in a position to say with the early disciples—"Nay, we did not so much as hear whether there be a Holy Spirit."* Pre-Millennialism stamps the Gospel, the Church, and the Holy Spirit as failures.

*Acts XIX:2.

XI. PRE-MILLENNIALISM IS ESSENTIALLY PESSIMISTIC.

IT is a doctrine that destroys all incentive to work for the reformation of society or of nations. It is built upon the principle that the world is growing worse, and that it will continue to grow worse, and that there is no power that can reform society until Christ comes in person to sit upon a material throne.

For example, Mr. Sunday says:— “Many have an idea that the world will grow better and better until the coming of the millennium, and everybody will be converted, and you hear that stuff preached, but the bible does not teach any such trash.”*

In the Chicago Prophetic Conference of 1886 the following resolution was adopted:— “The Scriptures nowhere teach that the whole world will be converted to God, and that there will be a reign of universal righteousness and peace before the return of the blessed Lord.”

Moody likened the world to a sinking ship. The ship itself is doomed. All we can hope to do is to get as many as possible off the ship and into the life-boats before the ship goes down. That is a hopeless view. It is pessimistic to the last degree. It is unscriptural.

Two-thirds of the Old Testament is addressed to nations, and to rulers *as rulers*. Nations throughout Scripture are regarded as moral persons, subject to

*Sermon on the Second Coming, p. 8.

divine law, and capable of conversion. It is prophesied that "all nations shall serve him"* and that "all nations shall call him blessed."† "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and they shall glorify thy name."‡

This is the mind of Christ when he says:— "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."§

Nowhere, perhaps, does the weakness of Pre-Millennialism become so apparent as in its interpretation of this passage. They interpret it by another passage in which Christ says:— "And this gospel shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations: and then shall the end come."¶ This passage is rendered by the Pre-Millennialist as though Christ had said that the gospel would be preached for "a witness *against* all the nations."

The Bible teaches that all nations shall be converted. It teaches that the gospel shall be the means of their conversion. How then is it possible to interpret this passage to mean that the fact that the gospel is to be preached to all nations shall *constitute the ground of their condemnation*, and that it *cannot* result in their conversion? Did Christ set a hopeless task before his disciples when he commanded them to

*Ps. LXXII:11.

†Ps. LXXII:17.

‡Ps. LXXXVI:9.

§Matt. XXVIII:19-20.

¶Matt. XXIV:14.

go and "make disciples of all nations"? Christ's language contemplates the *success* of the mission of the disciples, even to the point of conversion and baptism. He did, indeed, warn his disciples that they would meet with bitter opposition in their work, but he promised that he would be with them "unto the end." Where Christ labors with men no task is hopeless.

Some have contended that Pre-Millennialism is logically inconsistent with Mission work. Such a contention is groundless. The great weakness of Pre-Millennialism is that its views of Mission work are so utterly superficial. They would hurry into all the world and preach a mangled gospel in a half-hearted way, with no hope of making many disciples, but merely to bring the gospel to the attention of the heathen, so that the preaching of it, once even, in their hearing might be used as "a witness" against them to condemn them. It would seem that they are so eager for Christ to come and sit on the throne at Jerusalem that they begrudge the *time* it would take to "*make disciples*" of the heathen.

What a conception! What a lofty ideal! They would carry the gospel to the heathen in order that the heathen might be more speedily condemned. Of course, in the process, a *few* of the heathen will leave the sinking ship and get into the life-boat—but not many—not enough to obscure the Pre-Millennialists' vision of Christ on the throne at Jerusalem. Then, when the last benighted heathen in the hold or on the poop deck of the "sinking vessel" has caught the name of Christ, the Pre-Millennialist missionaries with a *few* of the heathen, just enough to fill the life-

boat *comfortably*, will row away to Jerusalem to reign with Christ for a thousand years. As far as ideals are concerned one would be tempted to choose to go down with the men in the ship. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, *until the whole was leavened.*"

The Pre-Millennial theory leads to the same pessimistic conclusions with respect to the salvation of society. According to the Pre-Millennialist there is no such thing as a *social* application of the gospel. If nations are not to be converted until Christ comes, as the Pre-Millennialist believes, why should Christians labor for the enthronement of Christ in national life? It is generally conceded that there is, as yet, no Christian nation in existence. The Pre-Millennialist would affirm that there *never will be* a Christian nation.

Pre-Millennialism is the grossest form of individualism. It aims at the salvation of the individual—nothing more. Christ said:—"Ye are the salt of the earth * * * ye are the light of the world."* Salt that does nothing more than preserve itself is of little use. It might as well be sand. A candle that does nothing more than illuminate its own tallow might as well be snuffed.

But why should Christians try to preserve a world that is fore-doomed to corruption? Why should they weary themselves to light a world that is destined to eternal darkness? The Pre-Millennialist is consistent at this point, if nowhere else. He is not con-

*Matt. V:13-14.

cerned about social regeneration. His sympathies could not for one moment be enlisted in a movement to evangelize the *nations*. How many of the leading Pre-Millennialists of this country have ever given their support to the movement to Christianize our own nation? They give their *whole* attention to saving the individual. They are very proud of their missionary enterprises in foreign lands. And yet how short-sighted they are, and how disastrously their narrow conceptions militate against the very ends which they are striving to accomplish.

For example, they would look with disapproval upon any attempt to Christianize the United States. But they are very anxious that the gospel be preached "for a witness" *against* the Chinamen. There was a time when we thought that China might become the first Christian nation. But China at last concluded that America had become great without adopting Christianity, and that, therefore, China might safely dispense with the Christian religion as far as her national life is concerned. China looked to America, and followed in our steps. Suppose America had been Christianized. Suppose we had written Christianity into our constitution, China would have followed our example. Who can measure the impetus that would have been given to Christian Missions in China if Christianity had been woven into the fabric of her civil constitution?

If the Pre-Millennialist thinks that the gospel must be preached in all the world as a "witness against" the world, how can it be done more expedi-

tiously than by writing it into every national constitution the world around? The constitution of China will reach a million where the Pre-Millennialist reaches ten. It is this narrow, individualistic conception of the nature of the salvation offered to the world by the crucified Saviour that is holding back the coming of the Kingdom in its fulness and power.

XII. VIEWS OF THE COMMENTATORS.

PRE-MILLENNIALISTS, in their prolific writings, are constantly claiming that the *scholarship* of the Church has favored their view of the Second Coming. This claim is pressed so persistently that some attention must be given to it.

Is the claim that the weight of Biblical scholarship favors the Pre-Millennial view valid?

The Prophetic Conferences usually add to their reports a list of names of great scholars who are declared to be exponents of Pre-Millennialism. Merely the names are given. No quotations from the works of these scholars are set down to support the claim, nor are any passages cited by which the reader might verify the claim. These lists read like a small edition of "Who's Who in the World of Biblical Scholarship."

Many who have no time to look the matter up for themselves, or who do not have access to the writings of the men referred to, are being misled. And it is hard to escape the conviction that these lists are *designed* to mislead. The publication of these names from year to year has a sinister look.

The claims of the Pre-Millennialists in this respect are false. The name of John Calvin is in the list published most recently.* No quotation from his

*Proceedings of the Prophetic Conference, Chicago, 1914.

works is made to prove that John Calvin was a Pre-Millennialist. His name is just set down as an exponent of the doctrine. The present writer has not at hand *all* the published works of John Calvin, but he does have the monumental work of Calvin—*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*—which the Pre-Millennialists evidently have never read. This work is a systematic exhibition of the principles of the Christian religion. Every statement in it has been carefully weighed. There may be those who are not willing to accept it as the expression of the basic principles of the Christian religion, but no intelligent person will charge John Calvin with holding contradictory views upon any subject with which he deals in the *Institutes*. Reference has already been made to his view of Pre-Millennialism as set forth in the *Institutes*. He says:— “Their fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation.”* Can John Calvin be fairly claimed as an *exponent* of a doctrine which he characterizes as a “fiction,” “too puerile to require or deserve refutation”?

Their claim to Justin Martyr, as has also been shown above, rests upon a text which was deliberately mutilated by Mede in such a way as to make Justin Martyr appear to say precisely the opposite of what he actually did say. The facts are these. There is no trace of Pre-Millennialism to be found in the writings of Clement of Rome, Tatian, Ignatius, Polycarp or in the writings of *any* of the Post-Apostolic Fathers of the first rank. The church fathers of the Nicene and Post-Nicene periods were unanimous in their re-

**Institutes*, Vol. II, Book III, Chap. XXV, sec. V. 1902 ed.

jection of Pre-Millennialism. In the list of the opponents of the doctrine may be placed such names as these:—Turretin, Grotius, Vitringa, Markius, Edwards, Owen, the Erskines, Boston and the majority of the Westminster divines, as the Westminster standards attest. The attention of the reader is directed to the following commentaries and histories and theological treatises:—Scott, Henry, Pool, Clarke, Doddridge, Ridgely, Lightfoot, Dick, Hodge, all of the great Princeton theologians from the Alexanders down to Benjamin B. Warfield, Lardner, Hammond, Hengstenberg, Hagenbach, Shedd, Glasgow, Barnes, Bush, Whedon, Fairbairn, *The Pulpit Commentary*, *the Bible Commentary*, Milligan (*The Expositor's Bible—Revelation*), James Orr and a host of others. All of these reject Pre-Millennialism. The theologians of the present day are at least fifty to one against Pre-Millennialism.

There is one scholar of the first rank to whom the Pre-Millennialists always point. Dean Alford was a scholar. He was an able exegete. In his study of the passage in Rev. XX. he once came to the conclusion that the doctrine of a bodily resurrection at the beginning of the Millennium was affirmed. He came to that conclusion with extreme reluctance, because he was keen enough to see, and honest enough to admit, that such a doctrine is irreconcilable with other clear affirmations of Scripture. Nevertheless he held the Pre-Millennial view. But it never satisfied him. In his later comment on Matt. XXV. he says:—“I think it proper to state, in this third edition, that having now entered upon the deeper study of the New Testament, I do not feel by any means

that full confidence which I once did in the exegesis, *quoad* prophetic interpretation here given of the three portions of this chapter XXV. * * * I very much question whether the thorough study of Scripture will not make me more and more distrustful of all human systematizing, and less willing to hazard strong assertion on any portion of the subject.*

This is Alford's conclusion with respect to "prophetic interpretation" as it relates to the Second Coming. This clear, candid statement of this great exegete never finds its way into Pre-Millennial literature.

The Pre-Millennialists claim the late Prof. C. A. Briggs. Prof. Briggs calls Pre-Millennialism "this ancient and oft-exploded error," and then in a lengthy article in the *Lutheran Quarterly Review* he proceeds to pulverize the fragments. If it were not for the fact that the Pre-Millennialists themselves publish this list it might be charged that "an enemy hath done this."†

What confidence can we place in men who, from year to year, publish these names as representative of Pre-Millennialism? They are either ignorant of the facts or else they have intentionally attempted to mislead. In either case they have forfeited all claims upon the confidence of men and women who are seeking the truth.

*This is from the third edition of 1855. In the fourth edition we find "Endorsed, Oct. 1858."

†Matt. XIII:28.

XIII. MODERN EVANGELISTS AND PRE-MILLENNIALISM.

IT is pointed out that practically all the modern, professional evangelists hold the Pre-Millennial view. How, it is asked, is this to be explained? It is self-explanatory. "Modern Evangelists" explains everything. The description will account for any kind of aberration. The popular, modern evangelist plays upon the emotions. He depends upon emotion for his results. Pre-Millennialism is a doctrine that lends itself readily to emotional discourse.

If a group of men and women can be persuaded to believe that in the very next moment they may be caught up into the air to participate in a "Secret Rapture," or transported to Jerusalem to sit on a throne, they are in a condition where they will be willing to do almost anything at all that has a religious cast. They will sign conversion cards as fast as they are handed out. They will shake hands with the evangelist or with anybody. Some become so enthusiastic that they will contribute *money*.

Pre-Millennialism is a popular doctrine with "modern evangelists." They would dislike to part with it. Many of them would be doctrinally bankrupt if they did.

There is, however, a certain advantage which the Pre-Millennialist has. This one doctrine constitutes his creed, and when he has learned a few passages from the Prophets and a few from the New Testa-

ment, he is equipped for life. If he is a preacher, or occupies that position, he can expound *any* text. He is like the colored divine who had a fondness for discussing infant baptism. On one occasion he was given a text from which it was thought the doctrine of infant baptism could not possibly be deduced. The text was:— "Adam where are thou?" The colored brother began in this way:— "I divide this text into four heads. I. Every man is somewhere. II. Most men are where they ought not to be. III. They ought to get out of there. IV. Infant Baptism. Without spending any more time on the first three heads, I will come at once to the discussion of the main doctrine of the text." The Pre-Millennialist is equally versatile.

XIV. CONCLUSION.

IN summing up it may be said that it has been shown:— That the Pre-Millennial doctrine is of Jewish origin; that it was not the doctrine of the Apostles; that it has never been accorded a place in the creed of the evangelical churches; that it is based upon a literal interpretation of a passage that lies in a chapter which is filled with figurative language; that there is but one passage upon which the doctrine can be based, even by such faulty exegesis; that the doctrine is not clearly stated in that passage since Pre-Millennialists differ among themselves at a hundred points; that a *figurative* interpretation of this passage brings it into harmony with the teaching of Christ concerning the resurrection and the judgment; that Pre-Millennialism perverts the Scriptural teaching concerning the unity of the Body of Christ; that it is in direct opposition to the Scriptural doctrine of a General Judgment; that it posits the restoration of material sacrifices, and is therefore grossly materialistic; that it involves a second humiliation of our Lord; that it dishonors the Holy Spirit; that it is essentially pessimistic; and that the weight of the scholarship of the Church has been against it through all the ages, and is today.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

*I John IV:1.

